

September 15, 1999

Lester Snow, Executive Director
CALFED Bay-Delta Program
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1155
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Mr. Snow:

CALFED came about to develop solutions to water supply and water quality problems in the Sacramento and San Joaquin Valleys. Our members have a vital stake in the outcome of the decisions that CALFED makes because they farm along the Sacramento River. CALFED's first priority needs to be a serious commitment to the development of new supplies of surface water storage in the State to meet the needs of a growing population and the environmental demands of the Delta. DWR's own studies warn of severe water shortages in the future. By 2020 annual shortages of 3.7 to 5.7 m.a.f. could occur during average rainfall years. Why do our elected leaders and policy makers continue to procrastinate in the area of additional surface water storage? We have studied this issue long enough. There is over 71 m.a.f. of annual runoff in the state of which 30 m.a.f. runs unchecked to the ocean. This has risen to almost 100 m.a.f. in a very wet year. Storing only a small amount of these excess flows would solve our environmental and urban water shortages far into the future. Without this course of action CALFED appears to agriculture, which has the most to lose, to be very disingenuous. The existing water supplies that agriculture uses are actually used by the people who consume the farm products that we raise. In California we raise over 250 different commodities to feed people locally, statewide, and all over the world.

CALFED's very aggressive land acquisition program along the Sacramento River and its tributaries will ultimately result in a net decrease of water flowing to the Delta. The riparian corridor that is being re-established will use more water year-around than farms in this same corridor. Where will water for this new use come from? CALFED's land acquisitions go on even though recommendations in the Sacramento River Conservation Area handbook (SB1086) have not been met. These include "safe harbor" from endangered species for neighboring farms, addressing patrol and trespass issues, and addressing impacts to adjacent landowners in funding proposals.

Another issue that CALFED needs to study is a vital concern that has been raised by the State Reclamation Board regarding the unprecedented amounts of re-vegetation that will be taking place in the Sacramento River flood channel. The concern is what this vegetative cover will do to flood flows down the Sacramento River and what the impact will be on adjacent farmers, levees, and to other vital infrastructure.

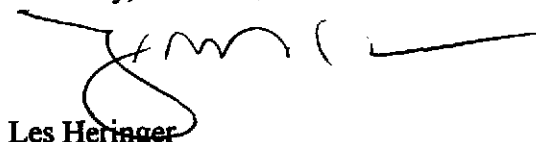
Barbara LeVake, Executive Director

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September 15, 1999
Lester Snow, Executive Director
CALFED Bay-Delta Program
Page 2

CALFED's stated goal is to make everyone better together. People involved in agriculture have to question that based on the results to date.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Les Heringer', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Les Heringer
President